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**The Purpose of Marriage in Islam and Christianity: A Comparative Study of Hadiths and
the Teachings of St. Augustine**

Master thesis

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INTRODUCTION

Every culture recognizes some form of marriage or similar kinship practice. In most cultures and religions, neither men nor women are considered complete without a spouse. Many religions consider marriage as a sacred pact that originates from a god; or that marriage is a union of the soul or spirit with some sacred power. Christianity and Islam for example, traces the origin of marriage to Adam and Eve and view their initial union as part of God's plan of creation. The blessings invoked at weddings emphasize marriage in the scheme of creation and reference marriage as a high state of pleasure here on earth. As a blessing from God, marriage in the communities of believers is not just a human contract but also enhances and complements the partners' spiritual development,¹ which enhances couple's ability to live in peace and harmony with each other according to the laws of God set before them in marriage.

In the same manner Christianity and Islam hold similar views that the bonding of man and woman originates from God during creation. God initially created Adam; and then, from Adam's rib, God created Eve, that man and woman may dwell with each other in harmony. Thus, for man and woman, who are each incomplete in themselves, both become complete in the context of the bond of marriage. They were both created by God to mutually complement each other emotionally and physically. God in his divine wisdom planned and created all persons out of one, in order that there may be similarity of race, flesh, and blood. Imagine if God had created Eve from a tree or some other animal: it is not conceivable that she would have been an ideal fit for Adam. But as God created Eve from Adam's rib, and when Adam saw Eve, she was suitable to him, and he dwelt with her and that established the first human bond or kinship union.

My Master's thesis will research the concept of marriage in Islam and Christianity. Specifically, I will attempt to establish a common ground for comparing motivations for marrying from both belief systems to demonstrate which of the motivations are compatible with each other and which are not. To compare the two religions systems, I will use the Hadiths and the works of Augustine. Thus, in the comparative part of this study I will use prominent and modern scholastic materials

¹ Hastings J., Selbie J. A., Gray L. H., editors. *Encyclopedia of religion and ethics*. (Edinburgh: Clerk; New York: Scribner 1980). Pg. 218.

such as: al-Bukhari, M. “Arabic-English translation of Hadiths, vol.7”,² and clarify the quotes with Kathir, I. “Tafsir ibn Kathir, vol. 1-10”,³ and compare with Aurelius, A., & Rotelle, J. E. “The works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century”.⁴ I have chosen these materials because I do not speak Arabic nor Latin - the original languages of Hadith and Augustine’s texts in which they were written many centuries ago. However, the current Hadith or Tafsir and The Works of St. Augustine that are available to me in English provide sufficient information and are valid for scientific research. I have chosen to compare the Hadiths to Augustine’s text in order to investigate the historical attitudes towards marriage in that era when the respective biblical and Islamic traditions were still developing. Further, Augustine was an authoritative father of the Christian Church; and the Hadiths, as the written statements and opinions of Prophet Muhammad, are one of the most important works in Islamic jurisprudence. Thus, these texts provide an abundant base for comparing motivations for marriage in Islam and Christianity.

My research methodology will be based on content analysis. When comparing the Hadiths and the writings of Augustine, I will establish what is the content of these writings: What “questions” are being answered? What is the social/cultural context that bred the body of work? This information will be used to later evaluate and give context to the results of the analysis. I will then address the content of the works in order to see how marriage is perceived: is it a religious, cultural, or social phenomenon? Based on these perceptions, I will be comparing the motivations in the writings.

My thesis will consist of introduction, four substantive parts, a conclusion, and a resume in Estonian. In the first chapter, I will establish the scriptural basis of marriage in Islam as such is based on the Quran; and I will attempt to give a short overview of the multiple traditions revolving around marriage. My purpose is to reveal the tension that becomes evident when comparing the seemingly straight-forward scriptural passages on marriage. In a similar fashion, in the second chapter, I will give an overview of the scriptural basis for Christian marriage and will give an overview of the current diverse situation in the Christian world. Special attention will, once again, be paid to the motivation behind the marriage contract. In the third chapter, I will introduce the

² Sahîh Bukhârî, Translator: Sunan Ibn Majah. <https://ahadith.co.uk/searchresults.php?q=marriage>

³ Ibn Kathir. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged)* Vol. 1-10. (Riyadh: Darussalam. 2003).

⁴ Rotelle, J. E. *The works of Saint Augustine: a translation for the 21st century*. Vol. 20. (Brooklyn: New City Press, 1990).

additional texts that I will be comparing – both of which are authoritative in their respective religious systems. In the fourth chapter, I will establish the results of my findings from the compared texts.

Why I have chosen this topic? Considering the high divorce rates in modern societies and how divorce impacts upon the upbringing and education of children, it becomes important to seek a fundamental knowledge of marriage and its validity; and also how a deeper understanding of the various reasons and motivations as to why people get married in different societies can make for a better society (e.g., education of children about the importance of morals). Vail mentioned that divorce rate in America is nearly fifty percent, and one-fifth of couples getting married for the first time will end up in divorce within a few years of contracting marriage.⁵ I believe the high rate of divorce in modern society is partially due to a lack of knowledge about the profound value of the marriage pact. My thesis will, albeit through academic prism, give an overview of how this holy and important bond between people has evolved.

Possible results? From the theological perspective Islam is a monotheistic religion that permits polygyny among its community of believers. However, Islam, did not introduce polygyny to the Arabs during the advent of the religion. Islam only regulated the ancient Arab tradition of acquiring several women with rights and values accorded to the status of women at matrimony e.g., the consent, and bridal gift. On the other hand, Augustine was an ascetic priest who sees ascetism as better than marriage; although he also held a view that the good of marriage lies in the ‘faithfulness’ of one man to one woman for the whole of life.

⁵ Vail S. H. *Reducing the divorce rate among Christians in America: Premarital counseling a prerequisite for marriage*. Liberty University School of Divinity. 2012. Pg.1.

1 MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO THE QURAN

For Muslims all around the globe, the Quran is believed to be a “sacred” revealed text from God to guide mankind.⁶ This holy text covers topics of every aspect of human life⁷ e.g., marriage. In order to understand a specific verse or topic of the Quran, *tafsir* is needed for clarification.⁸ Thus, in what follows I will use *tafsir* to clarify the Quranic verses on marriage: according to Surah 30:21: “And among His signs is this, that he created for you spouses from yourselves so that you might take comfort in them, and He has put love and mercy between your hearts. Verily in that signs for those who carefully think.”⁹ In this Surah we see Allah as a creator: He created a single person, and then He created the woman from the man—this forms the bond of union. Allah showed his greatness when he created Hawwa’ - Eve from Adam’s body: his left rib. Imagine if Allah had created Hawwa from any other root such as an animal. Surely, she would not constitute a fit complement for Adam. However, Surah 7:189 states that: “It is He who created you from a single person, and made his mate of like nature, in order that he might dwell with her (in love)” through marriage. Thus, in order for union to be “harmonious” or for couples to fit each other perfectly, Allah made the woman from the husband, of the same flesh and bone and thereby he puts “love” and “kindness” in their heart. For this reason, a man bonds with a woman because he loves her and he provides for her and the children.¹⁰ The message of the Quran is that all humans are from one family, all men and women descended from a human pair: Adam and Hawwa; and their union grew into “nations” and “tribes” for the population of the human race.¹¹

According to Surah 24:32: “Marry those among you that are single even the righteous slaves, male or female. If you are poor, Allah will make you rich through his favor; Allah is bountiful, All-knowing.” In this verse, Allah commands believers who are single to get married, for marriage is a means of gaining spiritual blessings. Before Allah, marriage is good thing. Allah gives us a

⁶ Khan M. K., Alginahi Y. M. *The holy Quran digitization: Challenges and concerns*. Life Science Journal. 2013 Mar;10(2):156-64.

⁷ Ünäl A. *The Qur'an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English*. Tughra Books, 2006.

⁸ Skreslet, P. Y. & Skreslet, R. (2006). *The literature of Islam: A Guide to the primary sources in English translation* (Vol. 58). Rowman & Littlefield. Pg. 55.

⁹ Current and all future Quranic verses taken from: Abdullah, Y.A. *The meaning of the holy Quran*. (Beltsville (Md.): Amana, 2001).

¹⁰ Ibn Kathir. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged) Vol. 1-10*. (Riyadh: Darussalam. 2003). Pg. 3884.

¹¹ *Ibid*, Pg. 231.

guarantee in the verse that, even when we are poor or lack proper funds, still we should not delay in getting married as Allah will take care of us bountifully from his bountiful mercy.¹²

According to Surah 4:24: “It is lawful for you to seek women in marriage with gifts from your property—desiring chastity not lust. Those (women) whom you marry, you must give them their agreed upon dowries. There is no harm if you reach an understanding among yourselves about the dowry, Allah is all-knowing and all all-wise”. Here the commandment is that, men should abstain from any form of sexual intercourse with women who are already married (although, sexual intercourse with slaves who are single or having concubinage is allowed). And to pay women their dowry was not only mentioned in the Quran, but Allah also commands his Prophet to convey this command to the believers; and as a command of Allah, this law cannot be changed by anyone or culture until the end of time.¹³

Surah 2:187: “They ‘your wives’ are a ‘clothing’ for you, and you too a clothing ‘covering’ for them.” This Surah verse references how a husband and a wife should complement each other. Women are clothing for men and men also clothing for women, thus, spouses holding each other in good times and bad. In short, it is recommended that husbands and wives should have constant sexual relations, with marriage making this act legal for spouses. And in order to control lust, men are also allowed to have intercourse with their wives after they break their fasting, for Allah understands and can forgive a partner’s sexual weakness.¹⁴ Here, we can also imagine how clothing covers our nakedness and scars, and so it similarly the case that married partners ought to cover each other’s faults or weaknesses.

According to Surah 4:1, Allah addresses all of humanity – Muslim, Christian, Jew, or Non-Believer – by stating: “O mankind! Reverence your guardian-Lord, who has created you from a single soul. From it He created your spouse and through them he populated the land with multitudes. Fear Allah, through whom Ye demand your mutual rights, and respect the womb that bore you. For Allah watches overall.” In this Surah verse, we are once again reminded that Allah first created man, and then made his spouse from him. And through these two has the world has become populated. Through the natural act of marriage between a man and a woman, and the

¹² *Ibid*, Pg. 75-77.

¹³ *Ibid*, Pg. 420-422.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, Pg. 508-511.

offspring they produce in different “shapes,” “characteristics,” “colors and languages” all over the world - they are to reverence the sovereign Lord who has created them, for Allah watches over all¹⁵.

There is a lot more of information about marriage in the hadiths of the Prophet which I will be discussing further in my third chapter.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, Pg. 368-370.

1.1 Arabic words associated with marriage

Marriage is considered a social and legal contract between a man and a woman¹⁶; which is recognized by custom and law, as the “means adopted by human society for regulating relations between the sexes.” Marriage is also the means through which children are determined in many societies.¹⁷ Thus, marriage between a man and a woman is called *nikah* in Islam. In most cases, the verb *nikaha*, “to marry”, is used to denote men marrying women (although it could also be used vice-versa).¹⁸ The contract bestows upon the husband the primary responsibility to provide for his wife, while the wife takes care of the home.¹⁹ It is explained in Muslim law that *Nikah*’ is a contract of union between two opposite sexes which legalizes their sexual intercourse and mutual co-existence and imposes certain duties and rights upon the two partners.²⁰ Usually, in Muslim societies, sexual relations between the sexes ought to acquire a lawful form, which is echoed in Islamic law as (*Nikah*) and means a marriage contract. Any sexual intercourse without a marriage contract is illegal intercourse (*safah, laysa bi-nikah*)”.²¹ Giving a woman away in marriage is called *ankaha* when there is mention of a father or guardian; *zawwaja* when God is mentioned. And married partners are both called *zawj* (pl. *azwaj*), the husband also *ba’l* (pl. *bu’ula*).²²

¹⁶ Afzal M., Bean L. L., Husain I. *Muslim marriages: age, mehr, and social status*. The Pakistan Development Review 1973.

¹⁷ Siddiqui A. H. *Translation of Sahih Muslim*. Book 8. Ch. 509. University of Southern Carolina Centre for Muslim-Jewis Engagement-Available from: www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/resources/texts/muslim/hadith/muslim. 2008.

¹⁸ McAuliffe J. D. *Encyclopedia of the Qur’an*, vol. I and III. Pg. 276. (Leiden-Boston: Brill. 2003).

¹⁹ Fluehr-Lobban C., Bardsley-Sirois L. *Obedience (Ta’a) in Muslim marriage: religious interpretation and applied law in Egypt*. Journal of Comparative Family Studies. 1990. Pg.1.

²⁰ Munir A., Akhter N. *Marriage in Islam: An Analytical Study with a Special Focus on Non-Traditional Marriages in Pakistan*. FWU Journal of Social Sciences. 2018. Pg. 1.

²¹ *Ibid*.

²² *Encyclopedia of Quran*, vol. 3. Pg. 276-278.

1.2 Why do Muslims marry?

1. In Islam, marriage is a religious duty as well as a contract that legitimize sexual relations between a man and a woman. Quran 7:189 states that: “It is he who created you from a single person (Adam), and created from him his wife (Hawwa’ - Eve), in order that he might enjoy the pleasure of dwelling with her.” Q. 30:21 states that Allah has put between couples, “affection and mercy” that they may enjoy each others company in marriage.²³
2. Marriage is a means through which sexual relations between a man and a woman is legalized for enjoyment, or for “procreation,” and as a means of “assistance and caring” between spouses.²⁴
3. Marriage is so important in Islam that when one marries, he/she has already completed half of his religion. Because marriage originates from Allah to man to make two people of opposite sex complete “physically”, “spiritually”, “emotionally,” and also a means of “psychological companionship”.²⁵
4. Marriage is a means to strengthen the relationship between different individuals and groups of the community and the prohibition of marriage is a methodology to prevent relationships between certain individuals and groups (Q 2:221; 4:24-5; 5:5; 24:3, 26; 60:10).²⁶

²³ Ali B. *Al-Nikah: The Islamic Concept of Marriage*. (2012) Pg. 2.

²⁴ Aminu-Kano M. Islamic Relief Worldwide/Marriage: www.girlsnotbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/IRW-Islamic-persepctive-on-CM.pdf (17.10.2019).

²⁵ Dogarawa A. B. *Marriage and Divorce in Islam*. (University Library of Munich, Germany. 2009). Pg. 1.

²⁶ *Encyclopedia of Quran*, vol. 3, p. 277

1.3 The Contract of Marriage

In Islam, a marriage contract entails some specific procedures such as; “proposal,” “acceptance,” and “the agreement and payment of *mahr*”. Then, the couple proceeds with the marriage ceremony which must be performed publicly among friends and family before a marriage can be considered a legally binding contract between a man and a woman.²⁷ Because marriage is such a vital contract for many Muslims, it cannot be entered into in a careless fashion. Thus, some Islamic countries such as Jordan and Syria have imposed an age limit of eighteen years, and in Egypt the minimum age to contract marriage is sixteen (although the age could be younger in many other Muslim societies) before a person can legally marry.²⁸ Usually, early Muslim’s marriage starts with the beginning of puberty and parents have a significant role in helping to contract marriage for the young couples. Muslim marriage, traditionally known as *nikah*, which mean “to tie” up together as in marriage bond, that join two opposite sex together,²⁹ and confers upon the individual some certain rights e.g., intercourse. However, the ceremony of marriage or *nikah* differs greatly from Christian or Western idea of marriage as a sacrament which is carried out in the church or the presence of a clergy. For Muslims, *nikah* carries the blessing of the religion even when conducted with or without a religious leader (imam), and without a specific venue like (Mosque). The main necessities are the consent of the woman and the man to marry each other,³⁰ and the *mahr* (bridal gift).³¹ These are the legal necessities demanded in Islam for a marriage to be binding and legally formalized.

In Muhammad’s time, the bride wealth or dowry was sometimes fixed at the “betrothal” stage of the process, and sometimes later (Q 2:236-7). However, the marriage is not considered finalized until the agreement upon the bridal gift is reached and paid, either immediately or later. A pre-requisite for contracting marriage is that the partners have reached marriageable age (Q 4:6), which

²⁷ Alkhateeb M. *Islamic marriage contracts: A resource guide for legal professionals, advocates, Imams, and communities*. (San Francisco, CA: Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence 2012). Ch. 3. Pg. 6.

²⁸ Baugh C. *Minor Marriage in early Islamic law*. Brill; 2017. Pg. 2.

²⁹ Balhera A., Kumar A. *Right to gender equality and Muslim laws of divorce (talaq-ul-bidaat): A critical study*. Vidhigya: The Journal of Legal Awareness. 2017.

³⁰ O’Sullivan K., Jackson L. *Muslim marriage (non) recognition: implications and possible solutions*. Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law. 2017. Pg. 3.

³¹ Khadduri M. *Marriage in Islamic law: The modernist viewpoints*. Am. J. Comp. L. 1977

is mostly the beginning of (*hulum, hayad*) or puberty.³² And through the marriage contract, sexual intercourse between the partners becomes lawful and both spouses are entitled to inherit from each other (Q 4:12).

In addition, each married partners has certain obligations to follow in order for their not to be misunderstandings between them. For example, the wife is obligated to grant her husband sexual intercourse whenever he wishes except during her menstruation, the time of her obligatory fasting and during the pilgrimage (Q 2:187, 197, 222-3). She is to acknowledge her husband's authority as the head of the family (Q 2:228; 4:34). The husband on the other hand, must give to his wife the dowry due to her, and to provide her with clothes, food, and housing for her and their children (Q 2:233, 240). The financial dowry that the woman receives is the main reciprocity for her marital obligations as mentioned above (Q 4:34).³³

³² Encyclopedia of the Quran, vol. 3. Pg. 278.

³³ *Ibid* Pg. 282.

1.4 Islamic Marriage Ceremony

“For Muslims, Islamic marriage (*nikah*) is a moral and binding ‘legal’ contract, which legitimizes sexual intercourse between a man and a woman.” *Nikah* is the means through which family is founded in Islam.³⁴ The *nikah* or marriage ceremony may be carried out wherever the couples want it to be held as there is no need of specific place such as a mosque. And no special rites needed to be followed. But the obligatory necessities that must be followed are as Azad (2018) states: (a) the proposal and acceptance, (b) presence of at least two witnesses, (c) and the *mahr* or bridal gift, which is to be paid to the woman immediately or at the time of divorce.³⁵ According to the sharia law, the proposed wife recites: “I have given away myself in *nikah*-marriage to you on the agreed *mahr*”, to which the husband recites, “I have accepted the *nikah*-marriage.” After these due procedures, the partners legally become husband and wife.³⁶

It should be noted that without all these necessities, a marriage is not considered legal and to have sexual intercourse without a completed *nikah* contract is seen as an adulterous act. Furthermore, there are two types of marriage processes in the Muslim societies, namely: ‘*urs*’ is the wedding performed in the tribe or the house of the man, while ‘*umra*’ is the wedding performed in the house or tribe of the woman (this distinction is made by Ibn al-A’rabi (d. 231/845) in *L’A*). Practically, these two forms agree with each other as in large measure they only differ in the choice of place where the ceremony takes place and the fact that in the ‘*umra*’ the *zaffa* “procession” of the bride is omitted because the wedding is performed in the husband’s house.³⁷

Thus, after the primary necessities of *nikah* are carried out as mentioned above, and the venue agreed upon, then proceed the *walima* or wedding feast. The groom hosts a feast called *walima*. Where friends and relatives are invited to the marriage feast.³⁸ Food is happily shared among the

³⁴ Uddin I. *Nikah-only Marriages: Causes, Motivations, and Their Impact on Dispute Resolution and Islamic Divorce Proceedings in England and Wales*. Oxford Journal of Law and Religion. 2018.

³⁵ Azad, M. *Laws of Muslim Marriage from the concept of the holy Quran*. (2018). Pg. 5.

³⁶ Husayn, S. A. www.al-islam.org/islamic-marriage-handbook-syed-athar-husayn-islamic-marriagenikah-ceremony

³⁷ Hastings J. *Encyclopedia of Religion and ethics* Vol. 10. Pg. 899-900.

³⁸ At-Tuwaijiry M. B. *The Book of (Nikah)*. Buraidah: King Fahd. 2000. Pg. 18.

invited guests, singing and dancing to celebrate the newly married couples.³⁹ And since this banquet is usually a big feast, the parents of the bride and groom are also involved in the arrangement processes to make sure that the ceremony is carried out properly.⁴⁰ The ceremonies need to comply and conform to the traditions of the society where the marriage is held so long as those societal laws do not contradict basic Islamic procedures for contracting marriage as mentioned above.

³⁹ Jaafar-Mohammad I, Lehmann C. *Women's Rights in Islam Regarding Marriage and Divorce*. Journal of Law and Practice. 2011. Pg. 6.

⁴⁰ Al-Ghazali A. H., Farah M. *Book on the etiquette of marriage*. Ihya Ulum ad Din. 1977 Ch. 2

1.5 Influence of Pre-Islamic Marriage on Islamic Understanding on Marriage

The *jahiliyah* period or the time of ignorance in the Arabia lands, “the family structure was patriarchal and family relations were determined by relations between men” alone. The pride of families was to have as many male children as possible as an arsenal for war, while women were only seen as a means to produce children.⁴¹ The position of women in the family was so inferior to men that it could be more-or-less likened to that of a “slave”. Women can only be provided basic care only through marriage,⁴² and for this reason girls get betrothed to men at young age. In short, before the advent of Islam there were no specific rules to govern the Arabian people other than the leadership of the chiefs of the tribes which is solemnly based on “personality” rather than a standard political system.⁴³ The highest value one can attain was to identify oneself within a strong tribal clan for “honor,” and “wealth”. And it would be a shame to be identified within a weak clan. The Arabian societies were always in war among themselves in order to gain power.⁴⁴ From the no rules for governance and the struggles for harmony among the tribes, before Islam arrived, there was no limit to the number of wives a man could acquire. Different kinds of devastating marriages were found among the Arabs at the *jahiliyah* period such as, “sending a wife to be impregnated by another man (*istibda*),” “marriage of one’s father’s divorcee (*maqt*),” and “exchange marriage (*shighar*)”.⁴⁵ For women in particular, society in Arabia before Islam was devastating. For example, there was a grievous practice of sending a woman to be impregnated by another man that was not her lawful husband. This practice shows how doomed the Arabia peninsula was before the advent of Islam, as most Muslims call this era the *jahiliyah* period - or the time of ignorance.

The Prophet Muhammad lived in this greivous time and lawless society of the Arabs for 40 years before his calling to prophethood⁴⁶. Thus, as a well matured man even before the revelation of the

⁴¹ Uktu N. S. *Arabia in the Pre-Islamic Period*: www.academia.edu/Arabia_in_the_Pre-Islamic_Period (20.10.2019).

⁴² El Saadawi N, Sa'dāwī N. *The hidden face of Eve: Women in the Arab world*. (Zed Books; 2007). Pg. 12.

⁴³ Hussein, M. *Arab World before Islam*. Pg. 1.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

⁴⁵ Masarwah N. *Marriage in Pre-Islamic Arabia as Reflected in Poetry and Prose: The Social and Humane Relations Between Husband and Wife*. Sociology Study. 2013. Pg. 3.

⁴⁶ Uktu N. S. *Arabia in the Pre-Islamic Period*. Pg. 1.

Quran, he was well acquainted with how greivous the cultures of the Arabs were. With the revelation of the Quran, the Prophet knew that there was need for cultural change politically, economically, and maritally. The other aspects of cutural change such as political and economical will not be explored here because those are worthy of study on their own. The changes that the Prophet made with respect to matrimony or marriage is the focal point of my study here.

Under the Islamic jurisprudence, marriage between a man and woman is a contract into which the couples willfully consent to enter.⁴⁷ After the proposal from the man, and the acceptance of the the marriage proposal by the woman, then the man seals the contract with the payment of *mahr* or bridal gift to the woman before two witnesses to make the marriage publicly known.⁴⁸ This is a marked difference from the pre-Islamic era as mentioned earlier in which the Arabs woefully transfered women among themselves for sexual relations. Islam gave women value by giving them the chance to give their consent to a marriage contract proposal from a man, and it was only through marriage that sexual intercourse between a man and a woman is made legal.⁴⁹ Islam also limited the number of wives a man can acquire to four – a departure from the preceeding unlimited number of wives that was allowed in Arabian societies.

⁴⁷ Bix B. H. *Marriage Agreements and Religion*. U. Ill. L. Rev. 2016. (Retrieved from: [heinonline.org/Marriage Agreements/Religion](http://heinonline.org/Marriage%20Agreements/Religion)).

⁴⁸ Alkhateeb M. *Islamic marriage contracts: A resource guide for legal professionals, advocates, Imams, and communities*. (San Francisco, CA: Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence. Retrieved June. 2012: 2016.) pg. 1.

⁴⁹ Büchler A, Schlatter C. *Marriage age in Islamic and contemporary Muslim family laws. A comparative survey*. Electronic Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law (EJIMEL. 2013. Ch. 2.

1.6 Position of Women in Muslim Marriage

“It is said that men and women are equal in the sight of Allah but with differences in their nature and responsibilities.” Allah has placed upon the man the primary responsibility to be *khalifah* or ruler and Allah has given men the strength and responsibility to be the provider for their family. Women on the other hand, have the unique capability to bear children in their womb and give birth, and take care of the home.⁵⁰ In an Islamic home, the position of women is subordinate to men. And within the traditional jurisprudence, many jurists quote the Quranic verse 4:3, that states “righteous women” are “devoutly obedient” to their husband.⁵¹ This places the husband as the principal head of the home and the wife is to please her husband - even sexually. On this perspective, Asifa Landes (2013) argues that even *mahr*, the financial gift a man has to pay to the women during marriage under Islamic law, has some elements of denigration to women at the matrimonial level. Thus, “classical Islamic jurisprudence used the term “price” to describe *mahr*, this means the contract of marriage is a sale.” This is likened to a man acquiring property, as if marriage makes the bride the groom’s personal property and she has to satisfy the husband.⁵² This practice could be traced to the pre-Islamic era where the husband used to marry/buy his wife from the nearest kinsman (*wali*, ‘nearest-guardian’) because it was the *wali* that used to receive the bridal gift at the pre-Islamic era. The guardian could give his daughter in marriage to whomever he want and he received and keep the dowry to himself, which was seen as a sale price. By paying some certain price to a girl’s guardian, the bridegroom becomes the legitimate owner of the bride. It is said that these customs are still in practice even at present time among the Arabic Bedouin tribes with very little modification.⁵³ However, with the advent of Islam, the original form of marriage by sale and the patriarchal family customs connected with this practice have been modified; but still as mention by Asif Landes, the payment of *mahr* perpetuates men ruling women in matrimony even in modern times. This is the case even though women were given more value

⁵⁰ Ali B. *Al-nikah: the Islamic concept of marriage*. Taraba State, College of Education 2012.

⁵¹ Alkhateeb, M. *Islamic Marriage Contracts. A resource guide for legal professionals, advocates, Imams, and communities*. San Francisco, CA: Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence. Retrieved 2012.

⁵² Quraishi-Landes A. *A Meditation on Mahr, Modernity, and Muslim Marriage Contract Law. Feminism, Law, and Religion*. 2013. Chp. 7. Pg. 1-2.

⁵³ Hastings J. *Encyclopedia of religion and Ethics*, Vol.7. Pg 864

under Islam. Thus, in a legal marriage contract, it became customary to pay the dowry to the bride herself⁵⁴ and it is objectionable if her *wali* or guardian desired to keep even part of the dowry. The Quran states that, Muslims must regard the dowry as a 'bridal gift',⁵⁵ no one is allowed to withhold it from them. Plus, a crucial element of marriage becomes the bride's consent. Under Islamic law, no marriage is valid without being preceded with the consent of the bride. Even at the present day, the bridegroom has to first of all, ask the girl's consent of marriage; and if she accepts,⁵⁶ then proceed the planning of the ceremony with her *wali*. Unlike prior to the revelation of the Quran to Prophet Muhammad, the nearest kinsman was entitled to give a girl in marriage to whomever he pleases even contrary to a young girl's will.

⁵⁴ Awad A. *Court enforces Mahr provision in Muslim marriage contract*. New Jersey Law Journal, 2002.

⁵⁵ Ali B. *The Islamic concept of Marriage*. Taraba State, College of Education, 2012. Pg. 1-2

⁵⁶ Rathi A. *family law*. Retrieved from: academia.edu/family-law.

1.7 Different Muslim Community Perspectives on Marriage and Dowry

A large part of this research focuses on Islamic marriage, and in particular, the Sunni Islamic practice. This is because the Sunnis are the largest sect of Muslims amounting to 90% of Muslims around the globe and are said to be the people of the Prophet. However, despite the large percentage of the Sunnis, it is necessary for me to give overview of the various legal and theological position on marriage in other Muslims societies.

The Hanifites for example allow a woman to make the marriage contract herself. She could also appoint a proper person to contract her marriage for her as legal guardian, that is, if she is of age and not under guardianship. The Shafi'ites, on the other hand, hold that neither a minor girl nor even an adult woman is entitled to do this; only her *wali* has the right to marry her to anyone; but he is at the same time generally bound to be compliant to the girl's consent if she desires.⁵⁷

Just like the Hanifites, the Malikites consider that the woman who is of age is entitled to make her own marriage contract, unless she belongs to a distinguished or wealthy family, or, in consequence of her beauty, and exceptional qualities such as education. In those cases, she may only be married through her *wali*. The *wali* may also oppose a marriage when the woman desires to marry a man who is not her equal – in the same 'social class' (Abu Hanifah also allowed the groom this right, if the bridegroom was unable or unwilling to pay a suitable dowry); the *wali* has to protect the honor of the family. The social class equal of a woman is called her *kuf* (befitting).⁵⁸

According to the theories of the various fiqh-schools about the equality *kafa'ah*, the Shafi'ites and Hanifites pay special attention to (1) birth: an Arab is considered of greater distinction than any non-Arab, and among the Arabs the tribesmen of Muhammad—the Quraishites—rank highest, as the relatives of the Prophet being the most distinguished; (2) the profession of faqih is highly emphasized, if the profession of the bridegroom is inferior to that of the father of the bride, the former is not a *kuf* of the bride. For example, no slave can be considered as *kuf* of a freewoman⁵⁹.

⁵⁷ Macdonald D. B. *Development of Muslim theology, jurisprudence and constitutional theory*. C. Scribner, 1903. Pg. 355.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*

⁵⁹ *Ibid*

1.8 Marriage Diversity Across Islam

During the advent of Islam in the seventh century, Prophet Muhammad encouraged the Arabs to denounce from the ways of worshipping many gods and idols, and to turn to the one true God Allah. He also regulated the old Arab culture of acquiring several women and allude one form of marriage-*nikah* by contract. This form of marriage by contract introduced by the Prophet, gave husband and wife specific roles each must play when contracting marriage. For example, during the pre-Islamic era the power to contract marriage was in the hands of Guardians or *wali* who could negotiate their daughters' marriage and keep the dowery to themselves. However, under the Islamic law women are entitled to gain their full brideprice. That is to say, the groom pay the agreed upon dowery directly to the bride herself, and as the women receive the brideprice, in return her husband gained full legal sexual intercourse with her.⁶⁰ The marriage contract negotiation between a man and a woman under the Islamic jurisprudence is of great importance to women in general, because, it is also a way of woment giving consent to a marriage proposal from a man. A right that was withheld from women during pre-Islamic era. It is believed that, by receiving the prideprice, a woman fully give consent to the marriage contract proposed to her by a man.

Sunni and Shi'i Muslim Marriage

The Sunnis are believed to be the vahement followers of the Prophet Muhammad's tradition. They amount to 85 to 90 percent of Muslims globally, and the Shi'a Muslims are almost about 10 percent approximately. The outbreak between Sunni-Shia relationship is due to religious-political differencies which could be traced back to the first decades of Islamic history in the seventh century. Although, Sunni and Shi'i adhere to the Quran as the one authoritative text, but, their differences seem to be about second textual source of Islamic law, the collection of authoritative statements and the deeds of the Prophet and a group of early Islamic believers. Beacause of the different perspective of early Islamic history, the Sunnis and Shia differ as to who are the

⁶⁰ Haeri S. *Law of desire: Temporary marriage in Shi'i Iran*. Syracuse University Press, 2014. Pg. 29.

trustworthy transmitter of the words and deeds of the Prophet⁶¹. They also differ as to who is the right successor of the Prophet.

On the matter of marriage, as mentioned in the Shi'ia jurisprudence, the Sunnis accepts two out of the three types of marriage practice within Shi'a community e.g., permanent marriage, *nikah*, and slave marriage, *nikah ul-ima'*, and reject temporary marriage, *mut'a* which is seen as a means of fornication and is not allowed among Sunni communities. This notion sparks a major controversial argument between the Shiites and the Sunni jurisprudence. In a bid to shed some light on the argument between the communities of believers on the matter of *mut'a*, Ibn-iArabi (thirteen century) summarizes that, *mut'a* was allowed in the beginning of Islam but was forbidden after the *khaybar* war (A.D. 628). But, still, the irresolution regarding the legitimacy of *mut'a* marriage persisted among the communities of believers. The Sunni ulama generally agree with their Shi'i counterparts that *mut'a* obviously existed at the time of the Prophet, and that the Prophet even recommend it to his soldiers. The Shi'ites further back their argument on the legitimacy of *mut'a* by quoting the sura of Woman, verse 24: "Beyond all that, is that you seek, using your wealth in wedlock and not in license. Such wives as you enjoy *istamta'tum*, give them their wages *ujurahunna* apportionate; it is no fault in your agreeing together, after the due apportionate". This is the only verse in the Quran that obviously has a reference of *mut'a*. Although, the majority of the Sunni ulama agree with the Shi'ites on the specific reference to *mut'a* of women in the Quran, however, they disagree on the following: (a) whether the reference in the Quran has been canceled-*naskh*, by subsequent Quranic commandments; (b) whether the Prophet himself took any unambiguous measures to ban it; and, (c) whether the second Caliph, Umar, could legitimately outlaw *mut'a* marriage⁶². The sunni ulama concluded on their part that, since the number of *mut'a* wives a man can acquire is unlimited, and since there is no divorce in a *mut'a* union, therefore, the custom of *mut'a* of women as been abandoned from the Quran⁶³ and is not encouraged among Sunni Muslims.

⁶¹ Inhorn M. C., Tremayne S. editors. *Islam and assisted reproductive technologies: Sunni and Shia perspectives*. Berghahn Books; 2012. Pg. 27.

⁶² Haeri S. *Law of desire: Temporary marriage in Shi'i Iran*. Syracuse University Press, 2014. Pg. 61.

⁶³ *Ibid*, Pg. 62.

Under the Shi'i jurisprudence, women are given legal right to negotiate their marriage contract. A woman is thus responsible for her own marriage contract terms e.g., the amount of the brideprice she wants, and the negotiation whether for the brideprice to be paid immediately or at the time of eventual divorce. According to the Quran, sura of Woman:24 and 25, the Shi'i jurisprudence classifies three types of marriage as legitimate: permanent marriage, *nikah*; temporary marriage, *mut'a*; and slave marriage, *nikah ul-ima'*.⁶⁴ One interesting fact about the Shi'i jurisprudence is that, according to the Quranic verse mentioned above they allow women to negotiate their marriage contract for themselves. However, the Shi'i idea of temporary marriage is not acceptable before the Sunnis which are the Muslim majority globally.

Ibadhi Muslim Marriage

The Ibadhis are another minor Muslim sect just like the Shias. Ibadhis amount to 3-5 percent of Muslims. Their jurisprudence on marriage is specifically the case of people who have sexual intercourse before marriage. Ibadhis hold a notion that when a man and a woman have sexual intercourse before a marriage contract, such guilty parties are not allowed to be legally joined together in marriage anymore. They are banned from even a legal union. However, in some Sunni schools it is lawful for the parties who had sexual intercourse before marriage repent and be joined together in marriage contract.⁶⁵ For the Sunnis, when two parties that have had sexual relation before marriage decide to do things in the right way according to the custom, they can be married. But, for the Ibadhis, all forms of sexual intercourse between a man and a woman before marriage is to be avoided because when such parties are cut, they can no longer marry each other.

In this kind of situation, the Sunni jurisprudence made the matter a bit considerate by giving such guilty parties a chance to repent and conform themselves to the custom of the society through proper marriage.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Pg. 30.

⁶⁵ Al-Nami A. K. *Studies in Ibadhism*. Cambridge, 1971. Pg. 96.

2 SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Christian marriage today differs from earlier practice and from modern secular marriage - most notably in the dignity it has sought for the women and the life-long nature it ascribes to the marriage bond⁶⁶. Western marriage has been controlled by an imperial Roman definition: a 'a union of a man and a woman and a communion of the whole life'. Marriage is taken to be, at least in theory, a natural, lifelong union of love between one man and one woman⁶⁷.

Early Hebrew law, which was founded on marriage by purchase, assigned a low status to women, who could be divorced for some 'indecentcy' (Deut. 24: 1 KJV). In His teaching about matrimony, Christ was concerned to restore marriage to its original place in God's plan of creation (Mk. 10:6-9; Mt. 19:4-6). He insisted that divorce was contrary to God's will. Mk. 5:31 f. (unlike Lk. 16:18) and Mt. 19:9 (unlike Mk. 10:11). However, it is assumed that He intended an exception in the cases of unchastity, implying His agreement with Deut. 24:1. And unlike other Jewish thinkers, Christ also saw a place for celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of God (Mt. 19: 10-12). While acknowledging the Lord's opposition to divorce (1 Cor. 7: 10), and St. Paul's pastoral practice permitted separation (1 Cor. 7: 11) and in some circumstances apparently freedom to remarry (1 Cor. 7: 15)⁶⁸.

Though the Christian understanding of marriage is not to be exclusively identified with natural marriage, it is not far from it. The passage in Ephesians (5:21-33) which ties together the Genesis text (2: 24) about natural marriage, the high mutual love expected of married Christians, and the very relationship between Christ and the church, establishes the range, moral significance, and mystical dimensions that have always characterized the central tradition of Christian thought.⁶⁹ It is most true that the teaching of the Gospel has done inestimable service, not only in restoring and preserving precious principles which were being forgotten in an age of moral laxity and grievous

⁶⁶ Livingstone, E. A., editor. *The concise Oxford dictionary of the Christian Church*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013. Pg. 367.

⁶⁷ Hastings E. *The Oxford companion to Christian thought*. Oxford University Press; 2000. Pg. 408.

⁶⁸ Livingstone E. A., editor. *The concise Oxford dictionary of the Christian Church*. Oxford University Press, 2013. Pg. 367.

⁶⁹ Hastings E. *The Oxford companion to Christian thought*. Oxford University Press; 2000. Pg. 408.

household conduct, but also in changing men's ideas of marriage-relation and of its duties and responsibilities. This result is the direct outcome of the teaching of the New Testament:

- 1) The spirit and teaching of the NT tend to put the mutual love of husband and wife in the foremost place. Marriage has been described as a provision for the propagation of the race and the proper bringing up of children. The NT recognizes the importance of the Christian household and the rightful education of Christian children but does not describe this as the main object of marriage. In here, marriage has been regarded as a provision for the satisfaction of a natural desire and a restraint upon unbridled indulgence. St. Paul acknowledges that marriage serves this purpose (1 Cor. 7: 9). And according to the book of Genesis, marriage was instituted, in the first instance, to satisfy the needs of man's social nature. Because it was 'not good that the man should be alone,' companionship with his fellow was necessary for the perfect development of his nature, marriage was instituted to provide him with the closest and most intimate form of companionship. Thus, the words, 'The two shall become one flesh,' imply much more than canal relationship—a thought which is instructively developed by St. Paul in (Eph. 5:2).⁷⁰
- 2) It is fair to say that our conception of marriage-relation has been changed, and changed for the better, by the high and honorable position accorded to woman in the NT, and the general improvement of women in the status of woman which has been brought about under Christian influence, and which has not yet, perhaps, reach its final goal. A system in which 'there can be no male and female' (Gal. 3: 28) so far as all blessings, privileges, and responsibilities are concerned, under which husband and wife are taught to remember that they are 'joint-heirs of the grace of life' (1 Pet. 3: 7), must necessity tend to elevate, and, if it may be so expressed, to equalize, the marriage-relation ⁷¹.
- 3) The teaching of St. Paul about marriage as a symbol or analogue of the mystical union of Christ with His church (Eph. 5: 22-34) has had a profound effect on Christian thought, elevating and purifying the conception of marriage. For Christians, marriage is something

⁷⁰ Hastings J. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. Vol. 8. Edinburgh: Clark; New York: Scribner, 1980. Pg. 434.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

more than the ordinary social institution; it is, above everything else, 'a holy estate'. Man and wife are no longer twain, but one flesh,⁷² to love and comfort each other in matrimony. Central to the Christian idea of marriage institution is mutual self-giving and love faithfully⁷³. Without faithfulness, Christian marriage could be reduced to any other common societal contract. However, for many Christian theologians, the sole good of marriage is the commitment of faithfulness couples make to each other in marriage on daily basis.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Thatcher, A. *Marriage after modernity: Christian marriage in postmodern times*. New York University Press; 1999. Pg. 303.

2.1 Influence of Judaism on Christian Marriage

The purpose of marriage in the Bible are companionship and procreation: “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help-mate for him... (Gen. 2:18 NIV). Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:18, 24) and “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth...” (Gen. 1:28)⁷⁴. Although polygamous family depicted in the OT and was common in ancient Israel, those of Jacob (Gen. 29), Gideon (Judg. 8:30), David (1 Chr. 3:1-9), Solomon (1 Kgs. 11: 3), and a host of lesser Israelites indicate that polygamy is not ‘unbiblical’⁷⁵; but for the Jewish teachers of the post-Exilic period had come to recognize that it was not consistent with the spirit of the original institution, which plainly demands the union of one man and one woman in marriage.⁷⁶ The Christian idea of marriage also takes this Jewish form of ‘a union of a man and a woman’, marriage is taken to be, at least in theory, a natural, lifelong union of love between one man and one woman⁷⁷. For Christians, marriage is something more than the ordinary social institution; it is, above everything else, ‘a holy estate’. A man and a woman are no longer twain, but one flesh.⁷⁸

And while monogamy is emphasized by many Christian theologians and thus shape the Christian idea of marriage, there is perhaps only one NT passage which distinctly overrule polygamy, viz. 1 Cor 7: 2 ‘Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband’,⁷⁹ We might conclude that marriage is a worldwide institution, there is thus no single marital structure. Thus, both polygamy and monogamy respond to political, social, economic, and religious needs and processes within different cultures⁸⁰.

⁷⁴ Berenbaum, M. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 13. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA: Keter Publishing House, 2007 p. 563.

⁷⁵ *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, p. 408.

⁷⁶ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 8, p 433.

⁷⁷ *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, p. 408.

⁷⁸ *Encyclopedia of Religion & Ethics*, vol. 8, p. 434.

⁷⁹ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 8, p 433.

⁸⁰ HASTINGS E. *The Oxford companion to Christian thought*. (Oxford University Press; 2000). Hastings J. *Encyclopedia of Religion and ethics* Vol. 8. Pg. 408.

2.2 Marriage as a sacrament in the Christian Church Tradition

The Latin word *sacramentum* (which meant “an oath, a solemn promise”), along with the earlier Greek word *mysterion* (‘mystery’)⁸¹; sacraments are thus means by which Christians partake in the ‘mystery of Christ’. This participation is accomplished through certain symbolic acts (e.g. the washing of ‘Baptism’, the meal of the ‘Eucharist’)⁸². There are seven mysteries-sacraments: Baptism, Chrism, the Holy Eucharist, the Priesthood, Penitence, Marriage, Unction. The Lord touches our lives through the sacraments, and the celebrations of the sacraments are signs of Jesus’ presence in our lives and a means for receiving his grace⁸³. ‘I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means by which we receive, and pledge to assure ourselves’ of being in fellowship with Christ. ⁸⁴ As Paul explained in his letter to the Christians at Rome, “in baptism one enters somehow into the death and resurrection of Christ and possesses the Spirit as the creative source of unending life” (Romans 6:3-5). In this perspective Christians came to liturgy to *receive* sacraments, to be freed from their sins, and to be blessed⁸⁵. The scope of the word varies. St. Augustine defined it as a ‘visible form of invisible grace’⁸⁶. And in affirming the sacramental aspect of Christian marriage, the church was officially saying that marriage among Christians is sacred, that it was intended by God to be not only a way to achieve closeness with God, but, marriage is a public symbol of something very profound, namely God's relationship with God's beloved, the members of the church. Gradually, the church took interest in creating a meaningful sacred rite to initiate marriage⁸⁷. Marriage now seen as a sacred rite can only be celebrated in the church with a priest laying hands on the couple to impact God’s blessing.

⁸¹ Fink, P. E, editor. *The new dictionary of sacramental worship*. 1990. Pg. 1117.

⁸² *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Pg. 508.

⁸³ Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 10, Pg. 902.

⁸⁴ *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*. Pg. 636.

⁸⁵ *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*. Pg. 1117.

⁸⁶ *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Pg. 508.

⁸⁷ Thomas, D. M. *Christian marriage: A journey together*. Liturgical Press, 1992. Pg. 182-183.

2.3 Marriage mystery in the Christian Church Tradition

Having explained the meaning of sacrament or mystery in the previous page, now, let us see what the word “mystery” actually mean when used in marriage term. The word mystery as we see in the previous page is a solemn oath, this oath is in the first place celebrated by the mutual consent of a man and a woman, but it is not considered by the church a true sacramental marriage unless the couples confirm their consent of the sacrament in the presence of a priest, join hands and promise to be faithful to each other till death⁸⁸. It is understood that, it is the knowledge of the sacramental oath that couples vow to each other hold them together even in times of marital troubles. And that, the sacrament of marriage as a state of life involves many faithfulness couples must commit to themselves. The way of living this vocation expresses and verifies often the quality of the lived faith. It is one of the privileged places where faith is life and where dogma is moral⁸⁹. Although marriage seen as a vocation by the church, however, marriage as not always been viewed as one of the mysteris by the church fathers. For example, early scholastic works defined mystery or sacrament as a sign and a cause of grace to believers. And since mystery is a sign and cause of grace, the church fathers could not accept marriage as one of the mysteries of the church because marriage involves sexual intercourse which they viewed as sinful. All through the first millennium until the twelfth century marriage was sin as sinful and could not be part of the mysteries of the church. It was in the twelfth century, that Peter Lombard defined sacrament as both sign and cause of grace. “A sacrament is a sign of the grace of God and the form of invisible grace in such a way that it is its image and cause.” Lombard’s definition sounds brilliant as it viewed marriage as a sign and cause of grace⁹⁰.

It was in the thirteenth-century that the church got a fundamental understanding and acceptance of marriage as one of the sacraments of the church through the work of Thomas Aquinas. In his reply to Lombard’s *Sententiae*, Aquinas argued that “marriage, in so far as it is contracted in faith in Christ, confers grace to do those things which are required in marriage e.g., faithfulness.” In his

⁸⁸ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 10, p. 903.

⁸⁹ Alain Mattheeuws, SJ. *The Augustinian doctrine of the "goods" of marriage*: https://scielo.conicyt.cl/scielo.pid_arttext (30.10.2019).

⁹⁰ Lawler M. G. *Marriage and the Catholic Church*: disputed questions. Pg. 2.

Contra Gentiles he vehemently mentioned that, “through marriage sacrament grace is given to married couples.” The Church first list marriage as a sacrament was aimed against the Cathari by the Council of Verona (1184). The Cathari preached that sexuality and marriage were sinful and the council countered the preaching by listing marriage alongside the other sacraments e.g., baptism, Eucharist, and confession. And the Council of Lyons (1274), listed marriage among seven sacraments as a formula for healing the great schism between East and West, and finally, the Council of Floerence (1439) stated that the seven sacraments which also include marriage “contain grace and confer it on those who receive them worthily⁹¹.”

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Different Christian Perspectives on Marriage rites and ceremonies

Marriage celebrations in all times and in all countries have been either essentially religious functions or, at all events, accompanied by religious rites and ceremonies. The solemnization of marriage by a religious ceremony is, therefore, no new thing peculiar to the Christian church. In fact, there is not a single feature in the marriage-services of the Christian communities that cannot be traced back to the *sponsalia*, or ceremonies of the Roman Empire⁹². On the other hand, the form of our Christian services, the ministerial benediction, and the clear expression of Christian doctrine in prayers and exhortations have helped to preserve a living sense of the peculiar sanctity of marriage as taught in the NT⁹³. It is thus inconceivable, that the celebration of marriage should not have been accompanied from the very first suitable act of Christian worship, or the accustomed marriage-rites.⁹⁴ The marriage-ceremonies in use all over the Christian world for hundreds of years past contain elements derived from two sources: the *sponsalia*, the ancient ceremony of betrothal, and the *nuptial*, or marriage-ceremony proper. The solemn troth-plight, the joining of hands, and the giving and receiving of a ring or rings with certain gifts of money—pledge of dowry—were one of the essential features of the betrothal ceremony.⁹⁵ Let me draw some examples of the necessity of dowry in marriage here. For example, in traditional African marriage customs, the relatives of the husband and of the wife establish a close link through the interchange of visits and gifts popularly known as dowry negotiations and payments. The price of the dowry is not certain. It is a negotiable process between the groom and bride families. This culture of receiving or paying of dowry is the license of owning a family within the African institution of marriage.⁹⁶ In other words, dowry helps in developing the bond between two families without which marriage will not be properly initiated. In contemporary urban India the term “dowry” suggests two quite different concepts. On the one side, it connotes a daughter's wedding settlement by the bridegroom, consisting of traditionally sanctioned items such as cooking vessels, furniture, jewels, and clothing. On the other it refers, increasingly, to a transfer of cash from the household of the bride to that of

⁹² *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 8. Pg. 435.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Waweru H. M. *Dowry in an African marriage: an alternative voice*. Svensk mission stidskrift. 2009.

the bridegroom. The latter transaction, though berated within the society at large as "dowry evil", is spreading, particularly among the urban rich. This "bridegroom price", simultaneously reduces the bride's worth in the household of the husband, this price not honored to the bride is simply a modern development of the classical Sidanam. The dowry a bride pays to the bridegroom's parents, depend on the groom's level of education, they use it to acquire husbands for their own daughter.⁹⁷ A kind of financial payment as in acquiring a husband, that rotates within marriage budget for the families involved. In Italy, parental consent was not made mandatory for a marriage to be valid at the Council of Trent, however, post-Tridentine church administrators promoted parental involvement by acknowledging dowry exchange as a vital component of marriage.⁹⁸ In their view, dowry add some value to the bride's worth in her matrimonial home or how the husband kindred respect the bride.

Thus, from the ancient *nuptial* practice of payment of dowry to a bride which is in practice also in Christian marriage, many cultures around the globe as mentioned above, also pay some dowry in marriage as a way of owning a family or establishing connection between bride and groom's family, although with slight cultural difference from how marriage is contracted in Christianity. Further on Christian marriages, human intentionality has been expressed in two categories, the consent and the vow. The procedures include: *N. and N., have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage? Will you love and honor each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives? Will you accept children lovingly from God and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?*⁹⁹ And because the declaration of consent and the vows that follow are not easily distinguishable and seem to be similar, Book of Common Prayer does not have a form for the giving of consent. Instead, Lutheran Book of Worship incorporates the idea of consent into the introduction to the vows: *N. and N., if it is your intention to share with each other your joys and sorrows and all that the years will bring, with your promises bind yourselves to each other as husband and wife*¹⁰⁰. Human intentionality is also expressed in the

97 Munshi, S. *Education and dowry: an economic exploration*. (IIM Kozhikode Society & Management Review, 2012). Pg. 1.

98 Sperling J. *Marriage at the time of the Council of Trent (1560-70): clandestine marriages, kinship prohibitions, and dowry exchange in European comparison*. Journal of Early Modern History. 2004.

99 Truscott J. A. *What Are the Essentials of the Christian Marriage Service?* Currents in Theology and Mission. 2004. Pg. 1-6

100 *Ibid*.

vow. In Lutheran Book of Worship the vow is: *I take you N. to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.*" A more traditional form of the vow is in Book of Common Prayer: *"In the name of God, I, N., take you, N., to be my wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.* Arguably and more in the spirit of the NT, BCP better expresses the commitment to love as well as the unconditional character of the covenant i.e., that the person will be faithful to and love the other regardless of the circumstances encountered in their life together.¹⁰¹ Then, the exchange of rings is a visible expression of the vow and is therefore one of the essentials of the service. In *Book of Common Prayer*, the blessing and the exchange formulae express the connection between the rings and the vow: *Bless, O Lord, this ring to be a sign of the vows by which this man and this woman have bound themselves to each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord.* They exchange ring as the visible of the vow of the marriage: *N., I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*¹⁰². Also, the ring, as a visible object, is a sign that the mutual love of husband and wife needs to be *made* visible. In other words, it is a reminder that in marriage both commit themselves to building a new life together, something that requires actions, gestures, and spoken words, not merely feelings¹⁰³.

The ritual elements in the marriage service that express human intention can be considered essential for number of reasons. First, the promises made in the consent and vows are the basis for the mutual trust that will hold the relationship together. The couple can have a new life together because each is accountable for fulfilling his/her promises. Without these mutual pledges of fidelity, there could not be a Christian marriage. Second, the statements of intention and vows give us a vision of what the married life should look like: faithfulness and love for the other partner, regardless of circumstances, i.e., *unconditional* love. Third, these expressions of intention make marriage part of one's Christian vocation. By promising certain things before God and the church, husband and wife show their intention to live out the meaning of their baptisms within the marital

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

relationship, that is, die to sin (selfishness, control over the other) and rise to new life (selflessness, mutual sharing with the other). Thus, expressions of human intention (especially the vows) are essential because they place the marital relationship under the purview of the paschal mystery of Christ¹⁰⁴.

After the solemn promise bride and the groom have to make to each other in the church before a priest, then, proceed the unveiling of the bride, the formal handing over of the bride by her father or guardian to the care of the bridegroom, the solemn declaration of the completion of the contract, and the bringing home of the bride in triumphal procession to her husbands' house were the accustomed nuptial ceremonies. The priestly benediction may perhaps be considered as the distinctively Christian addition to the ancient ceremonies and could be seen as a special sanctification to the ancient marriage rite.¹⁰⁵ That is to say, this *nuptial* ceremony has been in practice among the ancient people even before the advent of Christianity. Christianity and its priestly benediction only made the marital relationship between a man and a woman permanent.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 8, p. 435.

2.4 Marriage Diversity Across Christian Denominations

Roman Catholic

The early years of Christianity was dominated by the Roman Catholic Church and perhaps, the largest Christian denomination even today. My paper focuses mainly on the Roman Catholic teachings of marriage as a sacrament as I have described in my previous chapters, however, I will give some brief overview of the diverse teachings on marriage rite in the Christian societies. For example, the Catholics holds a view that marriage is a vocation. Marriage contract is one of the seven sacraments that joins a man and a woman in fellowship with God just like in the eucharist we remember the death of Christ. The catholic church ritual sees marriage as “the greatest measure of earthly happiness that a man can experience,” a bliss-filled ecstasy that is likened to heaven on earth. God has called us to matrimony and gave us the order of the event to willfully chose our spouse out of love, companionship, and raise a Christian home.¹⁰⁶

In the Catholic matrimony the home is of special interest and it is important to discuss what a catholic home look like since many people over the centuries have argued that, the one essence of marriage is to produce offspring. Thus, many people place high value on the matrimonial home. But before discussing the home, let us keep in mind that for every Catholic believer going into marriage fully knows that marriage is a sacrament—a visible sign of God’s grace to believers.¹⁰⁷ And let me be clear here that marriage as a sign of God’s grace just like the other sacraments, they do not produce grace, but they are a visible sign of communion with the Lord just like in Eucharist we remember the death of Christ. But this is a topic of its own which I will not be delving into here because the home is the center of focuss for now. The Catholics view marriage as a *procreative institution* from the second to the twentieth century. This notion that a man and a woman are joined together in marriage to produce and become mother and father has its origin in the book of Genesis command “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:22). Further on marriage as a procreative means for the Catholics, we see in the fourth-century in Augustine’s debate with the Manichees where the Bishop shed some useful light on marriage. Augustine’s work presented

¹⁰⁶ Kelly GA. *The Catholic marriage manual*. Random House; 1958. Pg. 3-4.

¹⁰⁷ Lawler MG. *Marriage and the Catholic Church: disputed questions*. Liturgical Press, 2002. Pg. 1.

marriage and sexuality as good because it comes from a good God. Procreation is the primary essence of marriage in order to expand the human race - which is good. However, this is not the full picture of marriage. For the Bishop, marriage is not only good for procreation purposes, but it includes natural love between the spouses as well. Natural or romantic love makes marriage possible for even old couples who are not able to produce children anymore but can share their lives happily together in marriage.¹⁰⁸ Here we see that the essence of marriage has been slightly shifted from procreation to also include love or affection between married couples. This theory means that sexual intercourse between married couples should not necessarily be intended for child bearing alone. What it does mean is that, sex or romantic pleasure between couples could also be just an aspect of the pleasure or the attraction couples feel for each other. Imagine for example, whenever you have sex with your partner it should be intended to produce a child. Indeed, that would have been damaging to any nations' economy. Also, and very importantly, modern societies would not have known what is birth control if sexual intercourse was only meant for the production of children. However, as Augustine's work gave the church a new idea in the fourth-century that sexual intercourse between couples can also be of pleasure, modern societies can relate to this idea and also see sex as romantic pleasure.

Although, Augustine paved the way to see sex in marriage to be also of pleasure, however, there is still something missing that the church had to deal with. That missing piece of the puzzle is a key part of marriage for many people, the upbringing of children in a Christian home. Thus, in the thirteenth century, Aquinas' work gave a very good explanation of marriage that is useful even today. First of all, "marriage has its principal end in the procreation and education of children;" and a second end "the sharing of tasks which are necessary in matrimony - husband and wife owe each other faithfulness;" and the third end of marriage which include God, "Christ's relationship with the Church," makes marriage a good thing and a sacrament. This means for Aquinas, marriage consist of three ends, namely: "procreation," "faithful love," and "sacrament." This well thought argument by Aquinas was first registered in the official Catholic Code of Canon Law in 1917 and "the primary essence of marriage as procreation and nurturing of children in good Christian way; its secondary end is mutual help in gratifying spouses' sexual desire" enshrined (Can 1013.1).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 30.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 31.

Eastern Orthodox Marriage

Marriage is a holy mystery celebrated in the Orthodox Church which blesses the bond of mutual love between a man and a woman, for the purpose of sharing their love more fully, the procreation of children, and the attainment of salvation. Orthodoxy holds that, the union between man and woman originates in Paradise, where God created and placed Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:27) so that human nature could be “very good” (Gen. 1:31)¹¹⁰. In the teaching of the East, sacramental marriage requires the mutual consent of the believing Christian partners and God’s blessing imparted through a priest of the congregation¹¹¹. Based on a shared vocation of love and sacrifice, thus, it becomes a redeeming event¹¹². The discipline of the Orthodox church accepts as sacramental only those marriages sanctified through blessing by an Orthodox priest¹¹³. Through ontological need for interpersonal relationship and social need for shared and responsible love offered by a free, intelligent person. Through marriage man and woman become “one flesh” (Eph. 5:31) and belong to each other eternally (“into the Kingdom”)¹¹⁴.

Protestant Marriage

Protestantism includes a wide range of denominations, each with its own history and theology, but most mainline Protestant bodies that are rooted in the Continental and English Reformation traditions articulate views of marriage which are quite similar in focus and meaning. It is possible, therefore, to speak of a Protestant view of marriage that is in large part shared by all mainline Protestant groups¹¹⁵. With the Reformation, Protestant marriage theory began to take shape: the legitimacy and significance of civil authority over the institution was recognized, the sacramental status which the Roman Catholic Church accorded the institution of marriage was removed, and the biblical basis of marriage was lifted up with frequent references to the wedding at Cana; and certain theological affirmations were made regarding the nature and significance of the institution.

¹¹⁰ McGuckin J. A., editor. *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity*. John Wiley & Sons, 2010. Pg. 379.

¹¹¹ *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, pg. 1129.

¹¹² *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, pg. 379

¹¹³ *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, pg. 1128-29.

¹¹⁴ *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, p. 380.

¹¹⁵ Yates W. *The Protestant view of marriage*. Journal of Ecumenical Studies. 1985. Pg. 41-54.

Thus, Martin Luther considered marriage an order of creation whose origin transcended both church and state. The importance he gave to marriage institution, if not his particular view of creation, has remain central to much of Protestant thought. Thus, Protestant churches speak of marriage as an institution "ordained by God," as a "holy estate," as an institution established by God," as "an institution of divine origin."¹¹⁶ And important Protestant theologians such as John Calvin and Martin Bucer viewed marriage as a covenant, and down through Protestant history the covenantal nature of marriage has been accented as the pivotal meaning of the relationship. For example, the new, proposed United Church of Christ service states, "God has called you to the covenant of marriage," and the marriage service from The Lutheran Book of Worship reflects the essence of the covenant in these words: "With high praise we recall your acts of unfailing love for the human family, for the house of Israel, and for your people the church. Pour down your grace upon (this couple) that they may fulfill the vows they have made this day and reflect your steadfast love in their lifelong faithfulness to each other."¹¹⁷

Down through the history of Protestantism, the covenantal bond has taken a more central form, the character of both husband and wife has accented companionship, love, justice, and intimacy as the moral shape God desires for the relationship. This in more egalitarian form, with its emphasis on mutuality and intimacy, is now assumed in modern Protestant services when they speak of "the bond and covenant of marriage".¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

3 THE HADITHS and SAINT AUGUSTINE'S TEXTS COMPARISON

When comparing the Hadiths to the works of Augustine I will use prominent and modern scholistic materials such as: al-Bukhari, S. "Arabic-English translation of Hadiths, vol.7",¹¹⁹ and clarify the Hadith quotes with Kathir, I. "Tafsir ibn Kathir, vol. 1-10",¹²⁰ and compare with "Aurelius, A., & Rotelle, J. E. "The works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century".¹²¹ I choose these materials because I don't speak Arabic nor Latin the native languages Hadith and Augustine's texts were written in the early centuries. However, the modern Hadith or Tafsir and The Works of St. Augustine that are available to me in English give good information and are valid for scientific research. Why I choose to compare the Hadiths to Augustine's texts? I have chosen these works as I wish to investigate the attitudes towards marriage at a time when the respective biblical and Islamic traditions were still developing. For example, Augustine was a very authoritative Church Father whose work influence the Christians doctrine, and the Hadith as the collected saying of Prophet Muhammad's tradition is seen as one of the most important texts (beside the Quran) that shapes the Muslims belief. And in clarifying the prophets' hadith quotes I will use Sahih al-Bukhari's hadith text. Of all the works of hadith texts I chose to use Sahih al-Bukhari, because his work is regarded as the most complete and authentic collection of hadith by many Muslims.¹²² Thus, these texts give reliable information for comparing marriage among the respective communities of Christians and Muslims believers across the globe.

In the current study, the procedure for analyzing the data were those developed by Roulston (2001). The first step of the study was gathering, evaluating, and assessing the materials needed for the study with detailed analysis in order to understand the effective knowledge from the materials.¹²³ Through the mediums afformentioned, the first step of the research was reading the data and understanding the effective knowledge in the texts. The second step was focussing on the data. As such, clearing and grouping the informations of the texts into 3 themes:

¹¹⁹ Sahih al-Bukhari. Arabic-English translation, vol. 7.

¹²⁰ Tafsir ibn Kathir vol. 1-10

¹²¹ Augustine, S., & Rotelle, J. E. (1990). The works of Saint Augustine: a translation for the 21st century

¹²² Sahih al-Bukhari, Translator: Abdul Hamid Siddiqui. <https://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/hadith/muslim> (23.04.2020).

¹²³ Roulston K. *Data analysis and 'theorizing as ideology'*. Qualitative research. 2001.

- A. In the hadiths of the Prophet, marriage is a religious duty/Augustine's text, virginity is preferred over marriage.
- B. In the hadith men are allowed to marry several women/Augustine's text a man has to be faithful to one woman
- C. In the hadith divorce is possible/Augustine's text it is not.

What follows next is a chart that shows the themes that I will be comparing in the study.

Table showing the comparisons of marriage between:

Hadith	Augustine text
1) Marriage is a religious duty. The Prophet says whoever does not marry is not part of his tradition.	Virginity is better for Kingdom purpose.
2) A man may marry several women at a time	Faithful to one partner in marriage till death
3) Divorce is possible if either of the partner fail to satisfy the other	Marriage must last till death

Table 1. showing the comparison of marriage between Hadith and Augustine Texts

3.1 Hadith-Marriage a Religious Duty

In my introductory chapters I have given varieties of explanation on how marriage is contracted in Islam and Christianity from the pre-requisites to the ceremony. In this chapter I will not be focusing on how marriage is contracted anymore as I did in the introductory chapters. Here I will be focusing on the traditions that were passed down to the community of believers from the Hadith and Augustine's texts.

Thus, the hadith of the Prophet state clear emphasis on marriage for the Believers (Muslims), hadith no. 1846 states: "Marriage is part of my sunnah - tradition, and whoever does not follow

my sunnah is not part of me. Whoever has the means let him get married,”¹²⁴ and Hadith no. 5065: Allah’s Apostle also said, “O young people whoever among you can marry, should marry, because marriage helps to lower sin in the community (e.g., immoral sex etc.), and whoever is not able to marry, should fast—abstain from women and sexual intercourse, as fasting diminishes sexual desires and lust.¹²⁵ In these verses we see clearly how Islam, a monotheistic religion, that does not encourage celibacy of whatsoever kind for its believers. One of the most vivid commands of the Prophet in the hadiths is the strict emphasis on marriage for believers. For Muslims, marriage is a religious duty and a moral safeguard as well as a social necessity¹²⁶ through which kinship is built in many societies. Although, Muhammad highly encourage his followers to reverence God, but not in an excessive way like abstaining from marriage for devotion purpose like some monastic priests.

Akhter (2018) also mentioned in his work that, both men and women in Islam, marriage is a religious duty. Because, through marriage an incomplete person becomes complete as God created male and female to be a cover for each other to live and enjoy their lives together according to the commands of Allah.¹²⁷ For the benefits of companionship, the hadith of the Prophet encourage believers who are mentally sane to marry¹²⁸ for the “safety,” “comfort,” and “production of children,”¹²⁹ and for the benefit of legitimate “sexual intercourse” between a man and a woman which is all inclusive in marriage, for this reasons Islam does not encourage believers to practice celibacy.¹³⁰ The benefits of marriage here are enormous as we can see. From the Prophet’s perspective, two people bind together through marriage is better than being a lone celibate person for whatsoever reason.

¹²⁴ *Sahih al - Bukhari*, Translator: Ibn Majah <https://ahadith.co.uk/searchresults.php?q=marriage> (23.04.2020)

¹²⁵ *Sahih al-Bukhari: Hadith*, Arabic-English vol. 7. pg. 20-21.

¹²⁶ bin Hamid Ali A. *An Islamic View of Marriage & Celibacy*. Universitäts-und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt; 2011. Pg. 10-11

¹²⁷ Akhtar RC. *Modern Traditions in Muslim Marriage Practices, Exploring English Narratives*. Oxford *Journal of Law and Religion*. 2018. Pg. 5.

¹²⁸ Adelakun O. S. *Requirements of a Valid Islamic Marriage Vis-À-Vis Requirements of a Valid Customary Marriage in Nigeria*. Available at SSRN 1915179. 2011.

¹²⁹ Khan, I. *Islamic Marriage and Involvement of Friends and Family Islam and the Advocacy of Marriage* (Vijayanagar Sri Krishnavevarya University Bellary, India, 2005. Pg. 6.

¹³⁰ bin Hamid Ali, A.: *An Islamic View of Marriage and Celibacy*. Pg. 1.

3.2 Augustine on Virginity

In the year 401 Augustine wrote two works titled *On the Good of Marriage* and *On Holy Virginity*. He wrote the treaty *On Holy Virginity*, as a response to Jovinians' controversial view of marriage as equal to virginity, Augustine clarified that virginity is of more value in degrees when compared to marriage. The treaty is also a response to the Manichees and the other extremist in the society who view sex and marriage as entirely evil, Augustine clarified this notion by stating that, marriage cannot be downplayed entirely as it has some good in its end however, virginity is better.

Augustine states that, "virginity is something preserved in the flesh, its origin lies in the spirit where it is maintained by religious devotion. And that, Christians virginity derives its significance from the virginity of the church as stated by Apostle Paul as the church, *a virgin betrothed to the one man Christ* (2 Cor. 11:2)." Thus, Ascetic persons devote their whole being to a faith that the church holds dearly in its hands. An example of this devotion is the Virgin Mary, who while in marriage, willfully maintained her virginity. Mary and other dedicated virgins therefore, shows that virginity is of choice and not a rule being imposed on anyone¹³¹.

Most of Augustine's treaty on *Holy Virginity* is focussed on biblical explanation against Jovinian's argument that marriage and virginity are equal. For example, Jovinian in his intelligence had cited (1 Cor. 7:26) *I think that in view of the present needs it is good for you to remain as you are*, Jovinian who himself, an ascetic priest, argued that Paul meant that celibacy was only useful as a way of escaping the troubles that comes along with marriage. However, this does not mean that virginity ranked higher in heaven above laity men in marriage. Augustine vehemently opposed Jovinian's interpretation. He insisted that virginity is like participating in the life of angels "a foretaste of eternal sinlessness" in heaven above. The Bishop pointed to Pauline text in 1 Cor. 15:41-42 (For one star differs from another star in splendour, just like the resurrection is more powerful than the dead), so also, is the same Christian celibacy for eschatological reasons. Thus, in heaven virgins will experience a greater degree of joy compare to others for: "It will be the joy of the virgins of Christ, about Christ, in Christ, with Christ, following Christ, through Christ, because of Christ." Furthermore, for Augustine, the difference between a virgin and a common

¹³¹ Augustine. *Marriage and virginity*. Vol. 9. Works of Saint Augustine, 1999. Pg. 65.

sinner is humility. That is, virgins should be watchful not to take pride in themselves, for it is God's grace that keep virgins from sin¹³² and not their will power.

On the second part of Augustine's treaty on *Holy Virginity* which we could relate to as an answer to the Manichean's view of marriage and sex as evil, Augustine who is a strong advocate of virginity and holds a view that virginity ranks higher above marriage in God's kingdom, however, sees some good in marriage and referenced the marriage of the patriarchs e.g., Abraham, Isaac, and Jackob which grow and became the nation of Israel as God's unfathomable plan. He vehemently warned virgins against pride, and stats that virgins should not see themselves higher than God's people who married and produced many children in the OT.¹³³ For the patriarchs there was need to marry and procreate so that the redeemer of the world-Christ can be born in the society of men. Thus, in a theological sense, the patriarchs married and produced many children because they had vision and they were expecting the Messiah.¹³⁴ Clearly, we can see that the Fathers of old in the OT had vission and expectation for the Messiah who will deliver God's people, this expectation drives them to marry and produce many children. For Augustine, the Fathers of old who married and produced children carried out God's purpose and not after wordly lust, and they will be greatly rewarded in God's kingdom. For this reason, virgins should not pride themselves over married people, for it is God's grace that keeps a virgin from sinning. Augustine concluded that, in the present time, "Those who are unable to practice virginity should marry; for it is better to marry than to burn (1 Cor. 7:9)," on the other hand, "Let anyone who is able to practice virginity accept it (Mt. 19:12), and need to be encouraged with love and also warned against pride."¹³⁵ For Augustine, as we can see clearly, virginity is a choice not a rule to be imposed on anyone. Because, in every society, individuals' religious commitment or devotion are not the same. In short, individuals' relationship with God is personal and private from the group a person adhere to in the society. But for such religiously segregated people such as virgins or ascetic priests, as stated by William James, "theres is a momment of spiritual convection" which their mind is transformed

¹³² *Ibid*, pg. 65-66

¹³³ *Ibid*, pg. 68.

¹³⁴ Otten W. *Augustine on Marriage, Monasticism, and the Community of the Church*. Theological Studies, University of Chicago, 1998. Pg. 400-401.

¹³⁵ Rotelle J. E. (ed.) *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century: Marriage and Virginity: The Excellence of Marriage, Holy Virginity, The Excellence of Widowhood, Adulterous Marriages, Continenence*. Vol. 1/9 Published in the United States by New City Press, New York, 1999. Pg. 68.

or became whole.¹³⁶ This statement is true about the Augustine's testimony. Augustine was just like any other man in the society, a sinner who tried many different things in search of the purpose of life. He had unsuccessful relationships with women and also had a son called Adeodatus. But, all the earthly things of life did not fulfill Augustine's heart desire for a true worth of life, until his baptism and spiritual conversion to an ascetic priest. Only then, did his heart find fulfillment with God¹³⁷ and with good scriptural knowledge, Augustine eventually became bishop and started his theological writings which became one of the most important texts in Christians dogma. It could be for this reason, that Augustine mentioned in his work that *virginity* is a personal choice not a rule for everyone, and those that cannot practice virginity should marry, although, virginity is preferable for Christians and in God's kingdom.

¹³⁶ Sirry M. *Pious Muslims in the Making: A Closer Look at Narratives of Ascetic Conversion*. Arabica. 2010.

¹³⁷ Otten W. *Augustine on Marriage, Monasticism, and the Community of the Church*. Theological Studies, University of Chicago, 1998. Pg. 386-387.

3.3 Hadith 2.2 Men may Marry Several Women

Traditionally, Islamic law permit Muslim men to marry several women, a kind of polygamous practice that allows men to contract marriage with several women at a time. For example, in hadith no. 5068: “The Prophet had nine wives and he used to go round and (have sexual relations) with all his wives in one night”.¹³⁸ Although, (the Quran limited the number of wives that an average man can acquire to four Surah 4:3), with an emphasis that a man who is aspiring for several women must be bouyant to provide for them. Why Islam allow men to marry upto four women specifically? Islam permits men to marry upto four women at a time. The number 4 is not randomly picked for Muslims regarding the amount of wives a man can acquire, else many will think that 6 or 8 women is even better than 4 only. The reason for this is that, four, is a cardinal number which the meaning is deeply rooted in the Islamic faith. It is said that, four indicates completeness, and four indicates the attributes of Allah as; *Rabb* (Lord), *Rehman* (Gracious), *Raheem* (Merciful) and *Malik* (Master).¹³⁹ Thus, four wives at a time could mean ‘fulness’ of God’s goodness and enjoyment to a man in matrimony.

Furthermore, an explanation of polygamous practice from an Islamic website stats that: “in societies where women outnumber men in population, or husbands that went to war and died, or women that are divorced are subject to loneliness for the rest of their lives and had no one to provide for them. Thus, Islam allow polygyny as a way of showing mercy to lonely women” in order that they maybe cared for or provided basic living amenities.¹⁴⁰ Because marriage is the major means through which women are provided companionship and protection in terms of food, cloth, and shelter etc. at the time of Muhammad. For example, a polygamous home is better for a divorced woman, as she can be taken as a subsequent sencond wife to a man and be provided living amenities. A man does not need to divorce his first wife in order to be able to take another wife, as many Islamic jurists view polygamy as way of showing mercy to women. And in some sense

¹³⁸ *Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith-* Arabic-English. Vol 7. Pg. 22

¹³⁹ Ahmadiyya Muslim, Author: Hazrat Khalifatul Masih <https://www.alislam.org/question/polygamy-in-islam/> (24.04.2020).

¹⁴⁰ *Polygamy in Islam:* <https://islamfaith.com/polygamy-in-islam-why-can-a-muslim-man-marry-multiple-wives/> (24.04.2020).

polygamy chastises men in a way that, instead of having illegal affairs with other women outside marriage, it is better to marry several and have a polygamous home. Perhaps, “in cultures that claim to practice monogamy, there are infidel practices such as men having sexual affairs outside their marriage.”¹⁴¹ Obviously, it should be clear that, an unprotected illegal sexual affairs is never a good option even when compared to polygyny. Because, while many people think of sex or sexual intercourse outside marriage as fun, in reality, it always lead to a broken heart and home. Because, sexual affairs are clingy in emotions and feelings, for this reason, marriage grant men and women legal sexual licence that it may be done responsibly even though in a polygamous home per say.

¹⁴¹ In America to be precise, a study from late 2016 conducted by the Associated Press and the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, shows that 22% of men in America say they have cheated on their partner while in marriage. These affairs outside marriage often lead to unplanned pregnancies and broken hearts and broken homes. Thus, it become necessary for us to consider which is more beneficial for families and societies; secret relationships or legally protected polygamous home? Polygamy in Islam <https://islamfaith.com/polygamy-in-islam-why-can-a-muslim-man-marry-multiple-wives> (24.04.2020)

3.4 Augustine Text 2.2 Faithfulness in Marriage

In Islam, a man is permitted to marry several women and have a polygamous home. The practice of polygyny is scripturally allowed in the Quran and in the hadith of the Prophet. Although, most modern Muslim countries nowadays accept the practice, but they don't recommend it. On the other hand, Augustine mentioned chastity in marriage in his work as (*fides*), this word also draws parallel of understanding with Roman marriage, and business, in business term the word could be used as a way of doing good business transaction. However, *fides* in its most general sense of usage here means "sexual loyalty to one partner" and the sacrament, "that is the promise couples made to each other in marriage" on the altar before a priest, such promise is unbreakable until death. This vow also mean having only one sexual partner.¹⁴² That is, husband and wife owe each other faithfulness by not having sexual relations outside their marriage. Breaking this promise out of lust, as in having sexual relation with someone else is an adulterous act.¹⁴³ An unfaithful act that can break any bond of trust and home. For example, in our daily routines we demand trust and transparency from the people we deal with. When you think of fidelity as a necessity even in our daily businesses, then, won't we also want fidelity from our other half or partner? Indeed we ought to demand chastity in marriage because this is what makes the union blissful, a marital home cannot stand if there is no faithfulness or trust between husband and wife. In order to establish a happy home, married couples must be faithful and be ready to enhance each others weaknesses even sexual weakness. And even though, the common essence of marriage for many people is to produce children. But, even when sexual intercourse happen between couples for the sake of romantic pleasure and not to have children, Augustine called it an "understandable" sin that God could easily pardon. He further argued that, as far as the couples are sexually faithful to each other, the marriage is good a thing.¹⁴⁴ Unlike in the Hadith, where a man is permitted to take several wives at the same time (although not recommended by many modern Muslims), however, in Augustine's text, 'fidelity' mean— (one man to one woman) only. Here, a man nor a women is not allowed to marry another partner

¹⁴² Aurelius A, Rotelle J. E. *The Works of St. Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century*. New City Press; 2003. Pg. 17.

¹⁴³ Hunter D. G. *St. Augustine on Marriage and Sexuality*. Edited by Elizabeth A. Clark. Selections from the Fathers of the Church 1. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996. Pg. 6

¹⁴⁴ Aurelius A, Rotelle J. E. *The Works of St. Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century*. New City Press; 2003. Pg. 17.

after the first marriage until death. They are to cling to each other for the rest of their lives, for a stable romantic enjoyment between them. Even in bad times, dissolution is not allowed for the sake of re-marriage, a marriage must last a life time. Marriage in Augustine's text is sacramentally indissoluble. I will discuss further what Augustine meant by 'marriage sacramentally indissoluble' in my next chapter.

3.5 Hadith 3.3 Divorce in Islam

Islam permits separation from a spouse. Thus, the Arabic word *talak* initially mean “separation,” which has its root from *tollaqa*, to release (an animal) from suckling or from its mammal. But, when *talak* is used in matrimony, it means to separate from the bond of marriage, as divorce.¹⁴⁵ It is unimaginable how simple divorce is carried out in Islam. In hadith no. 9, chapter 29, when a man tells his wife: “You are free of me, and I am free of you” three times, this counted as divorce and is legally valid. We all know that family feud is common almost in all marriages either as quareell, or through an argument etc. A man could be misled through anger and use the simplicity of divorce on his poor wife, which he would regret later when he is calm.

Although, as simple and permissible as divorce is in Islam, the Prophet warned his followers not to misused divorce, in hadith no. 2039: “There are three matters in which seriousness is serious and joking is serious: marriage, divorce and taking back (one’s wife).”¹⁴⁶ Now, let us imagine that a man pronounce divorce on his wife three times with those simple words as mentioned above ‘You are free of me’, returning back to the same woman he divorced is almost impossible or unimaginable. Because, according to Islamic law, it becomes unlawful for a man to return to the woman he divorced. Except the divorced woman undertake a new marriage, and the current husband consummate the marriage sexually and wilfully divorced the woman, only then, the formal husband has a chance of proposing a new marriage contract to the same woman afresh.¹⁴⁷ Surely, no sane man would like to divorce their wife and have another man marry and have sexual intercourse with the woman and reject her, before he stands a chance of having her back. This law strikes a counterbalance on Muslim men not to misuse the simplicity of divorce of Islam. Because Allah “hated divorce” hadith No: 2018., and although divorce is allowed, but it should not be sort after or commonly used to dissolve marriage.

¹⁴⁵ Mukhopadhyay A, Modak D, Jana A. K, Banerjee T. K., Mukhopadhyay A., Moinuddin S. A, Chakrabarti R. *Politics and Society* Vol. 1 [1996-97]. Pg. 74.

¹⁴⁶ *Sahih al- Bukhari, Translator: Ibn Majah* no. 2039
<https://ahadith.co.uk/searchresults.php?q=there+are+three+things+in+which+seriousness+is+serious+and+joking+is+serious> (23.04.2020).

¹⁴⁷ Mukhopadhyay A., Modak D., Jana A. K., Banerjee T. K., Mukhopadhyay A, Moinuddin S. A., Chakrabarti R. *Politics and Society* Vol. 1 [1996-97]. Pg. 75.

3.6 Augustine – The Indissolubility of Marriage Contract

In Augustine's text complete abstinence from marriage is of greater glory. However, marriage contract between couples that bind them together in faithfulness is a good thing. The matrimonial oath or promise couples made to each other before a priest in the church bind them together for the whole of life. This is what makes marriage a sacrament for the Church in Augustine's text.¹⁴⁸ Thus, marriage contract here is indissoluble, as long as a married man lives, he must cling to one partner for his whole life. If either of the couple by any chance divorce the other, both of them cannot remarry so long as the other partner lives. Because, before the church marriage must last a life time. Even in the phase of adultery, practically, divorce is not allowed since either of the couple cannot remarry. They are to find common grounds to mend their short comings and be reunited to each other for "it is the Lord's decree that couples should not separate from each". And although the one essence of marriage is to beget children, but, even for this reason marital vow cannot be broken if the union fail to produce. For example, if a marriage does not produce children, couples cannot for this reason divorce each other. Marriage is undissoluble *in the city of our God* (Ps. 48:1).¹⁴⁹ The sacrament of marriage is a sign of "the indissoluble love that Christ has for the Church."¹⁵⁰ Due to these theological reason, Christian marriage is seen as a natural love between a man and a woman that should last forever. Unlike in the hadith, where a sane man could divorce his wife however he wants it even without a specific reason, a man can pronounce *talak* on his wife "I divorce you three times," and the marriage is legally nullified.¹⁵¹ However, in Augustine's text, the marriage oath that couples swear in marriage must last till death.

So, why did Augustine call *Proles*, *Fides*, and *Sacrament* the three goods of Marriage?

As I mentioned earlier in chapters of Islamic polygamy, Islam permit men to marry upto four women at a time for a significant reason. Four, is a cardinal number that the meaning is deeply rooted in Muslims believe about God (*See chapters on Islamic polygamy for further explanation*). So also, we can see how Augustine scripturally envisioned the attributes of God and called

¹⁴⁸ Augustine (1996). *Marriage and virginity* (Vol. 9). Pg. 38.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, pg. 38-39.

¹⁵⁰ Hafliidson R. *Outward, Inward, Upward: Why Three Goods of Marriage for Augustine?* Studies in Christian Ethics, 2016.

¹⁵¹ Siganporia M. U. *Indian Muslim women: Post divorce problems and social support*. Indian Journal of Social Work, 1993. Pg. 2.

marriage 'the three goods' in his work. On the basis of simple explanation of Augustine's three goods of marriage, many people could imagine that, the three goods represent (the Triune Persons in one God) And for others, it could mean deeper level of friendship. Although the Triune Persons in one God came close to a good understanding, but, such guess is too shallow to be accepted of marriage here. Also, it is too common to call marriage friendship. This understanding reduce marriage value to somewhat mere feeling which is wordly. Marriage cannot be reduced to only friendship or feeling because, if a union is based on mere feeling, what will couples do when in bad times? And how can marriage contracted on such knowledge last parment? Definitely marriage contract in Augustine's text is much more than friendship or feeling. Thus, a more deeper and profound understanding of Augustine's Three Goods of Marriage is realised in true love as: "co-parenting happen in the content of friendship between husband and wife; fidelity is defined as 'the exclusive and supportive nature of the love between spouses; and finally, the sacrament of marriage is a sign of the 'indissoluble love that Christ has for the Church'¹⁵²." The meaning of marriage here is deeply rooted in the scripture. Augustine's 'trinitarian structure of marriage,' although cartegorized in different dimentions, but are all binded together in love.¹⁵³ In short, in Augustine's text and even present day, for many people procreation or child bearing is just a bonus to marriage and not the primary essence. But, the agreement to love someone till death is a manifestation true love. Just as God is love eternally, so also, we in his image extend his love in our heart to the one person most dearest to us by committing to the promise, 'till death do us part, I will love you forever'.

¹⁵² Hafliðson R. *Outward, Inward, Upward: Why Three Goods of Marriage for Augustine?* Studies in Christian Ethics, 2016. Pg. 3.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

4 Result Analysis

This research on “The Purpose of Marriage in Islam and Christianity: A Comparative Study of Hadiths and the Teaching of St. Augustine” was based on content analysis. On the introductory part I gave varieties of overview on marriage in Islam and Christianity, and, on the comparative part of the study was Hadiths and Augustine texts on marriage, were I compared the traditional attitudes towards marriage and establish them into comparative themes analysis.

In the introduction part, both Christianity and Islam hold the same view that, the bond of man and woman originates from God during creation. God created Adam and from his rib, He created for him a perfect match Eve, that they may dwell with each other in love and harmony. Thus, the bonding of Adam and Eve established the first institution of marriage, and all humanity originated from Adam and Eve. God made Adam and from him, God made Eve, to comfort and complement Adam. So is the same for all humanity; marriage makes an incomplete being complete spiritually and physically, and psychologically. Christian and Islamic marriages have a lot in common theoretically as mentioned above. However, the similarities of marriage between Christians and Muslims theoretically from the Bible and Quran, yet, they differ in practice due to cultural traditions. For example, Muslims maintain a view that, marriage is a social and civil contract that a man and a woman wilfully enter for the purpose of satisfying each other sexually and for the need of producing children. Thus, marriage as a social civil contract in Islam, its contracting procedures are as common as any other civil contract including the motif behind *mahr*—bridal gift, which is compulsory to pay to women when contracting marriage. Furthermore, an Islamic marriage rite does not necessarily need the presence of a religious clergy like (Imam) for the union to be legally binding nor does it need to be contracted at a certain place like (Mosque). This is unlike Christian marriage rite where it has to be contracted in a church before a priest. The only preliminaries to Islamic marriage are: the consent of the spouses to marry each other, signing of the marriage contract before at least two witnesses, and the payment of the agreed upon *mahr* from the groom to the bride. Only on those basis is marriage legally contracted in Islam, and it carries the blessing of the religion even when contracted without the presence of a clergy. Whereas, on the other hand, marriage in Christianity is a solemn sacrament or covenant that binds a man and a woman together, as the two becomes one in heart. That is, Christian marriage is a mystery that can only be contracted by the mutual consent of a man and a woman, in the presence of a priest in

the church, and the couples join hands and promise to faithfully love and support each other for the rest of their lives. In here, we see that in order for a Christian marriage to be valid, it has to be contracted in the church and before a priest. Unlike, Islamic marriage that can take place anywhere and the presence of a religious leader such as (Imam), is not necessary and yet, the marriage carries the blessings of the religion.

Further on marriage from the texts comparison of Hadith and Augustine's text: In the Hadith, Prophet Muhammad commands: "marriage is part of my sunnah, and whoever does not marry is not part of my religion." This statement makes marriage a religious duty for Muslims, to marry and produce children. Also, for Muslims, marriage is a means of sexual and emotional gratification for couples (although the marriage can be annulled if either of the couples fail to satisfy the other). Due to these benefits that marriage adds to the society and individual's life, Prophet Muhammad does not permit celibacy for Muslims even for the sake of religious devotion unlike in Augustine's text. In Augustine's text, "marriage is good, but virginity or abstinence from marriage is better" for God's kingdom purpose. For Augustine, the church has a calling to practice celibacy just like Christ himself. Christ led the example of virginity in order to do the pastoral will of the Father in heaven. Augustine vehemently concluded in his text that, those that practice celibacy rank higher than married people in God's kingdom. And for those that chose marriage over virginity, Augustine states that, "the good of marriage depend on couples' faithfulness to each other." That is, marriage is only between a man and a woman faithfully bound together in union, and the promise couples made to each other on the altar before a priest makes marriage a sacrament, that there can be no separation until death. In Augustine's text, marriage is perceived to be a natural love (at least in theory) that should last forever. Unlike in the Hadith where a man can marry several women and divorce if he will to do so if the woman failed to satisfy him.

Prophet Muhammad valued marriage so much in his days because, Arabia in the early centuries was filled with continuous war among the tribes. And many lives were lost in the continuous battles. Thus, there is the need to marry and produce children to populate the lands. This could be the obvious reason the Prophet so much encouraged marriage and commands Muslims in his Hadith to get married and produce children as much as they can.

On the other hand, Augustine, during his days was not under military pressure like Muhammad. However, before Augustine's calling and spiritual conversion to Christianity, he lived a normal life and suffered failed relationships with women. In short, it was recorded in his journal that,

Augustine, had a son called Adeodatus. For this reason, it is possible to conclude that societal problems such as failed relationships with women might have influenced Augustine's attitude towards marriage when he became bishop and started writing his texts and focussed his vision on God's kingdom. Maybe, Augustine's idea in his texts was just a way of encouraging men to seek the Kingdom of God in order not to suffer from earthly marriage the way he had suffered.

In short, Augustine encouraged Christians in his work to value virginity over marriage because, after Christ had been born, died, and resurrected, the scripture had been fulfilled. That is, if there is no more marriage and child bearing, the better. It only means eschatology or the second coming of Christ will happen faster.

From the texts used in this study, I acknowledge that St. Augustine and Prophet Muhammad had spiritual revelations when composing their texts on marriage. Although, I cannot scientifically prove their spiritual visions. But, it seems more logic to conclude from their personal lifestyle, that the societal cultures they lived influenced their visions of marriage in their texts. Thus, future research will seek to use anthropological methods to study "The effects of culture on spiritual revelations."

CONCLUSION

From the study the following knowledge was gained:

For Christians and Muslims-marriage originates from God as a means to complement the opposite sexes in psychological and physical comfort. Marriage is also a means of gaining spiritual blessings.

- In the hadiths, the Prophet command all Muslims to marry and produce children to populate the lands.
- In Augustine's text, virginity ranked higher than marriage in God's kingdom. Christ was an example of a celibate priest who dedicated his life in doing pastoral mission on earth according to the will of the Father in heaven.
- In the hadith marriage between two opposite sexes can be contracted anywhere without no specific religious ceremony, however, the presences of atleast two witnesses is required.
- In Augustine's text, marriage is a sacrament that can only be contracted in the church before a priest, and with a solemn vow of faithfulness.
- In the Hadith, a sane man could divorce his wife and vice/versa if either of the partner fail to satisfy the other.
- In Augustine's text, marriage is indissoluble. Even in bad times couples cannot separate from each other for whatsoever reason.
- Islam permits polygamous marriage, a kind of practice that allow men to marry upto four women at a time.
- In Augustine's text, a man and a woman are sacramentally bound together in marriage untill death seperate them.
- In the Hadith a man may have concubines e.g., sexual relations with his slave woman.
- In Augustine's text, a man can only have one sexual partner e.g., his wife only.

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RESÜMEE

Arvestades kaasaegse ühiskonna abielude lahutamise protsenti ja seda, kuidas see kasvavaid lapsi emotsionaalselt mõjutab teeb vajalikuks uurida abielu kui institutsiooni juuri ja valiidsust religioosetes tekstides. Kõrge lahutusprotsendi üheks põhjuseks võib olla asjaolu, et inimesed ei mõista abielulepet ja selle väärtust. Abielu mõistmine läbi religioosete tekstide prisma mõjutab oluliselt abielus olevate inimeste omavahelisi suhteid kodus ning võib vähendada lahutuste määra.

Käesolev magistritöö uurib ja võrdleb abielu kontseptsiooni islamis ja kristluses. Peamine rõhuasetus on olulisematel põhjustel, miks mõlema religioosuses kogukonnas abiellumist toetatakse ning millised on peamised abiellumise motivatsioonid kristluses ja islamis.

Nende kahe suure religiooni võrdlemiseks kasutab käesolev töö *ḥadīth*-eid ja Aurelius Augustinuse kirjutisi. Allikate valiku ajendiks on uurida suhtumist abielusse ajal, mil mõlemad traditsioonid olid oma suhteliselt varases arengujärgus. Augustinus on oli väga autoriteetne kirikuisa ning *ḥadīth*-id kui Muḥammadi ütlused ja arvamused on islami olulisimaid tekste. Nende tekstide analüüsimine on viljakas pinnas leidmaks ja võrdlemaks pühakirjadega seotud motivatsioone abiellumiseks.

Käesoleva magistritöö peamine uurimismeetod on tekstide sisuline analüüs ja võrdlus. Seega keskendub töö võrreldavate tekstide analüüsil sellistele aspektidele nagu millistele probleemidele tekstid lahendusi üritavad leida ja mis on neis kirjeldatud traditsioonide sotsiaalkultuuriline kontekst ning mida tekstidest leitud informatsioonist järeldada võib.

Töö esimene peatükk kirjeldab koraanil põhineva abielu peamisi jooni ja põhjusi ning annab lühiülevaate islamimaalimas esinevatest erinevatest abieluga seotud traditsioonidest. Teine peatükk esitab pühakirjal baseeruva kristliku abielu põhijoonte kokkuvõtte ning vaatab lähemalt kaasaegset kristlikku maailma, kus erinevates usulahkudes võivad olla võrdlemisi erinevad traditsioonid. Kolmas peatükk keskendub vastavates religioonides autoriteetsete tekstide *ḥadīth*-ite ja Augustinuse kirjutiste tutvustamisele ja võrdlemisel. Neljas peatükis analüüsitakse tekste põhjalikumalt ja esitatakse võrdluse tulemused. Erilist tähelepanu pööratakse abiellumise motivatsioonidele, eristades sarnaseid ja kardinaalselt erinevaid põhjusi abiellumiseks.

Käesoleva uurimustöö käigus ma leidsin:

- Islam lubab meestele tinglikult polügaamiat kuni nelja naisega abielumise näol, sest see on ainuke võimalus, kuidas naised saavad Muhammadi ajal sotsiaalseid esmavajadusi.
- Islam lubab meestel kuni nelja naisega abielluda, kui kõiki naisi peetaks üleval ja koheldakse võrdselt. Arvu neli on eriline tähendus mis tähendab “täielikust”. Nelja naisega meest peetakse rikkaks või täielikult abielu nautimas, sest abielu teeb mittetäieliku inimese täielikuks paarisuhtes olevate emotsionaalsete ja seksuaalsete heaolude näol, mida vallaline inimene kogeda ei saa.
- Islam lubab meestel abielluda kuni nelja naisega korraga ja omistavad selle arvu nende usule jumalale kui ‘täielikkusele’.
- Lõpuks, käsib prohvet Muhamedi hadiit kõik moslemid abielluda ja lapsi kasvatada

- Kristluses on abielu mehe ja naise vahel pühendunud armastus ja harmoonia teineteise täiendamiseks. Kristlik abielu on metafoor, paarid on Jumala ühised pärijad Kristuse vaimu kaudu.
- Augustinus väidab, et mehe ja naise abielusuhe on lahutamatu isegi truudusetuse korral (ehkki alandus on Jumala ees karistatav patt. Heebrealastele 13: 4). Ja kui paarid otsustavad lahutada, ei saa nad uuesti abielluda. Nad peavad jääma üksikuks või lahendama oma abikaasaga probleemid, sest Jumala tahe on, et abielusuhe jääks püsima.
- Lõpuks, Augustinuse jaoks on abielu hea, kuid neitsilikkus on parem.

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